



Nataraj

Newsletter of Ananda Marga Suva Sector April 1998

Pracar Season Resumes

TERM 1 HAS COME TO signify a resumption of pracar activities throughout the Sector. Classes are currently under-way at schools, universities, community and TAFE colleges or our own jagrtis and offices in Adelaide, Auckland, Brisbane, Canberra, Katoomba, Lismore, Maleny, Melbourne, Perth, Port Moresby and Sydney. A new Dharmacakra and unit has started in Byron Bay.

In Melbourne the courses and workshops held at the jagrti and at the WWD school have been publicised as a 'Yoga Health Centre'. Brochures were placed in surgery waiting rooms throughout the city. This approach gives the program a respectability and reaches a wide range of people. Calls and inquiries are now coming to both centres.

Introductory retreats were held in early April at A'nanda Rainjana' (20 attended) and in the Blue Mountains (attended by 30). This was an inaugural program at A'nanda Rainjana'. The current team of Dadas Kr's'n'aseva'nanda, Gunaraga'nanda and Manaklis'ta'nanda painted the old building, cleaned the area and built temporary showers and toilets to prepare for the crowd. Didi Ananda Vitandra' and Rukmini came to make the

retreat team complete. Several of the participants stayed for a large and vibrating Dharmacakra later on Sunday evening.

At the same time in Wentworth Falls near Katoomba Didi A'nanda Laghima', Dadas Divyarupa'nanda, Parama'nanda, Kalyanvrata'nanda and Prabuddha together with Amrtadhara, Devakanta, Gautama and Kalpana' hosted the best attended newcomers program in recent years. 11 sisters and 3 brothers took initiation.

A Special & Warm Welcome to new Acharyas

DADA SARVABODHANANDAJI our new Sectorial Progressive Men's Spiritual Association (PMSA) Secretary is now in New Zealand. Dadaji is the most senior Dada from the Philippines, has been working as an Acharya since 1973 in Europe and North America, and is well known for his energetic kiirtans and sweet disposition.

Didi A'nanda Hiteshana'ji is our new Sectorial Girl's Proutist (GP) Secretary now stationed in Brisbane. This is Didi's first posting outside of India where

she has worked for years running projects and co-ordinating programs. Didi has brought with her a number of valuable practical skills such as driving and computer literacy.

We also wish to bid farewell to Dadaji Kr's'n'asundara'nanda who has been working in Sydney for the past several years for the propagation of PROUT. Dada has been transferred to India and his replacement is expected soon.

More Acharyas have been posted recently and the next issue of Nataraj will introduce them once they've arrived.

News from A'nanda Vatika'

VISTARA SCHOOL CELEBRATED its 10th Anniversary with a joyous occasion on the weekend of 15-16 November. Over 200 people attended. Heartfelt speeches were given by a number of distinguished guests including: Mr. Bill Rixon, local member of Parliament and supporter of the school since its inception; the longest standing staff member Lyn, the first graduate of the school (who now attends university) and her mother, several parents of currently enrolled students and Dada Shubatma'nanda.

The children performed two songs, "I Love This Tiny Green

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SPOTLIGHT ON NZ

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Island" and "Keep On Moving Forward", and unveiled a beautiful painting which they created.

The activity-filled day was captured on video.

Sunday was celebrated with Sa'dhana' Shiviir and a house warming for the new school building attended by many margiis and Acharyas.

Since the New Year enrolments have increased to 52. The Kindergarten students are shining brightly. A special welcome is extended to all the margii children: in KG, Dhyanesh Gunther (son of Bhavanii and Vinay); in year 1, Julian Govinda Pfeiffer (Miirabia's son); in Year 4, Tara Bromley (daughter of Amala' and Jagadeva).

Guam School Purchased

AFTER NINE YEARS OF operation the Ananda Marga Primary School in Guam has purchased its own building, the same which has housed the school since its beginnings. Renovation is currently underlay. If you phone to Didi A'nanda Nivedita' you'll hear the sweet sound of jack (or other) hammers pounding away in rhythm to the universal beat. This is the first owned property of Ananda Marga in this region.

Society Building...

CONGRATULATIONS!

On 21 February at 1.26pm a 7 pound, 10 ounces bundle of joy was born to Liila' and Ramakr's'n'a in Hobart. All

those hours of marathon Koashikii prepared Liila' to greet Rainjan (also affectionately known as 'Squeaky') as he completed the final moments of entry into this realm of Saguna Brahma.

Another little brother, Patrick, made his debut at 11.30pm on Tuesday, 31 March in Maleny. Tapas' and Guhan are still at hospital while this is being typed.

Aloka', daughter of Utpala' (Ann Welch) and Phillip Hammial in Woodford (Blue Mountains), celebrated her 1st birthday on 15 March. Ruby Luna, daughter of Rashmi (Lewina) and Miguel in Sydney, celebrated her 1st birthday on 25 March.

Tapas and Premavatii took their marriage vows in Auckland - see the spotlight on Aotearoa section for more details.

We also wish to send our best wishes to Bhavesh from Aotearoa and Koaverii from USA who married during the Winter retreat at A'nanda Kanan in Missouri.

At present there are three brothers (Manotosha, Cinmaya and Pranesh) and four sisters (Ananda Mayii, Shanti, Laliita' and Sucarita') in the LFT training centres.

Last December Ba'ba' told LFT sister Nitya Prema' in a dream that she must leave Australia before the end of March for Acharya training. Taking things to heart, Nitya boarded a flight on Sunday, 29 March to London en route to the idyllic village of Ydrefors in Sweden. Nitya has been working tirelessly at the Kindergarten in Melbourne since last year. We wish her all the best and look forward to hearing about her first posting as a new Didi.

AMURT NEWS

Registration in PNG

AMURT has now been registered in Papua New Guinea. Through the efforts of Dada Mahadeva and support from the AMURT sectorial office and the recent visit of Dada Prabhas'a'nanda the registration process was completed in March. A small building is under construction which will serve as the AMURT office and Ananda Marga centre in Port Moresby.

Philippines Project Re-funded Since 1996 AMURT Australia has been supporting the work of Baba's Foundation Inc. in Davao, Philippines. The BFI projects have focused on women and marginalised farmers, mostly tribal people, in the districts near to Davao in Mindanao Province. Two projects have received funding with help from AusAID; a backyard livestock project helps women to earn an independent income through raising swine, the marginalised farmers project assists local small-scale farmers to increase their productivity and learn to adopt sustainable agriculture practices. Both projects have successfully facilitated the formation of co-operatives and revitalised the traditional 'bayanihan' or community approach where members work together on each other's plots. This year AusAID approved another round of funding for the backyard livestock project and will provide \$25,000.

Gaotama was approved to work for AMURT through the Work-for-the-Dole scheme which is administered by Mission Employment,

Katoomba. In his capacity as office assistant Gaotama has been maintaining correspondence with AusAID and ACFOA, writing and editing reports, maintaining the database and supporting fundraising efforts.

Spotlight on Aotearoa

NEARLY 100 PEOPLE ATTENDED the public Ananda Marga wedding of Tapash and Premavati in Auckland on 21 March. The marriage was beautifully orchestrated by the couple themselves. Auspicious sounds of the conch shell and music introduced each partner as they entered the grassy setting surrounded by lush green native bush. The ceremony conducted by Didi A'nanda Uddaya' and Dada Krpasundara'nanda was deeply appreciated by all those attending. Sumptuous meals, a cultural program and Akan'd'a Kiirtan followed into the evening. Brimming with inspiration the newlyweds are already planning the next public retreat, perhaps for Ba'ba's birthday.

A RAWA concert was held at the Auckland jagrti attended by 35 people. Prabhat Sam'giita was performed by Dada Parananda and others. The event proved to be a door opener to the small Bengali community of Auckland members of which will now organise a larger concert in April. Another program and mini-retreat is arranged for early April in Hokianga.

Dada Parananda also toured the South Island. A front page interview and photo was published in "The Nelson

Leader" one of the main newspapers there. A radio interview and a pracar stall at a local festival were also conducted in Nelson. 5 people took initiation. Visits were also made to Christchurch and Dunedin and to Wellington on the North Island where an evening kiirtan and discussion program was organised in the arts centre.

Before the New Year Didi A'nanda Prajina Paramita' also toured both islands, attended the Convergence festival, conducted a newspaper interview and gave 11 women initiation.

Dada Sarvabodhananda dived full on into university pracar and networking with different groups. Two classes have started in the Auckland Uni. attended by about 18 students. Didi Ananda Udaya has Yoga classes for sisters in the Jagrti with 8 attending. She also has weekly meditation evenings for sisters at her residence. Anuraga' has started a well received yoga class at the local high school. She has been accepted to teach 6th form PE stress module.

An evening program in Hamilton was organised to see off Madhukanta on the eve of his departure back to Australia. It was at his parents house and about 25 friends and family came. Some joined the Kiirtan and meditation before the collective meal. After dinner there was a short cultural program with Sitar and a song by Madhu. ■

Pastures of Plenty at Ananda Palli

SINCE LAST YEAR THE OLD proverb 'As you sow so shall you reap' has been fully realised in the humble fields of biodynamic soil at A'nanda Palli. When Dada Divyamuktananda took up the rectorship the farm started buzzing with activity. Since then and together with Dadas Kr's'n'aprema'nanda, Manaklis't'a'nanda (until he left to Lismore) and Sambuddha hundreds of boxes of zucchinis have been picked and sent to market. Broccolis, cauliflowers, cabbages and pumpkins have also been planted and harvested. A crop of Echinacea has been planted and should supply valuable leaves for the next 5 years. Income from the sale of these crops has been steadily reducing existing debt and should soon contribute to further development on the land.

Hmmm!?!?

Well for those of you who love statistics here's one you may find interesting. According to Dada Vedaprajanananda, hit statistics on the AM News web site for Tuesday 25th November show that around 1% of the total population of Cocos Islands logged on to the site seeking information. Sounds impressive, no? Maybe an Acharya gave a very inspiring talk there?

Well, actually if truth be told Cocos Islands is a national park way out in the ocean with a miniscule population (I'm told it was around 500 at the time of the last census) and we're not ►

sure if it was one person hitting the site 5 times or 5 different people, but still....

The AM News site is on <http://geocities.com/~amnews>

We wonder if the fact that the Cocos Island's web page is on geocities has anything to do with it?

Upcoming Fasting Days

Ekadashii = 11 days after the full or new moon

Amavasya = new moon

Purnima = full moon

Ekadashii	April 22
Amavasya	April 26
Ekadashii	May 6
Purnima	May 11
Ekadashii	May 21
Amavasya	May 25
Ekadashii	June 5
Purnima	June 9
Ekadashii	June 20
Amavasya	June 23
Ekadashii	July 5
Purnima	July 9
Ekadashii	July 19
Amavasya	July 23
Ekadashii	August 3
Purnima	August 7
Ekadashii	August 17
Amavasya	August 21

Upcoming Social Functions and Festival Days

April 30th - anniversary of Calcutta massacre (1982)

May 1 - 3 Wellington Regional Conference

May 11th - Ananda Purnima (Ba'ba's birth anniversary - 6.07 am, 1921)

June 19 - 21 Brisbane Regional Conference

June 26 - 28 Sydney Regional Conference

July 3 - 5 Melbourne Regional Conference (Adelaide)
followed by RDS/SEC/SPB

World News

AM in Bali

Namaskar! In December Narada Muni and I spent an interesting week in Bali. Unfortunately the Global Neo-Humanist Education Conference that was the main purpose of our visit was cancelled. But still it is always inspiring to see how Ananda Marga is going in different parts of the world--and the news from Bali is excellent.

HEALTHY UNITS Our first stop was in the main city of Denpasar. We were welcomed in the home of the Bhukti Pradhan. 40 people regularly attend DC in Denpasar in a simple jagriti. Next day we headed off for an Indonesian Sectorial Retreat at the master unit on the north of the island near Singaraja. Singaraja also has a jagriti and kindergarten and good attendance at DC.

INSPIRING RETREAT The retreat was inspiring and well-organised with perhaps 200 people attending from Bali, Java, Malaysia, and acharyas from the entire sector. There was a group of 10 mostly new margiis from Guam as well on a one week inspirational tour with their Dada and Didi. Highlights of the retreat were the RAWA evening which included dramas, comedy and a stunning shadow puppet theatre complete with musical accompaniment. It was also my first time to hear Indonesian-style kiirtan, which is sometimes accompanied by an entire gamelan (a small

orchestra of marimba like instruments, gongs, drums, etc.) There was a well-attended all night kiirtan, classes and a revolutionary marriage ceremony (all in one packed weekend).

MUSLIM COUNTRY All of this is particularly impressive given that Bali is part of Indonesia: a Muslim country. I learned this the hard way on my first evening. Our flight arrived after midnight and I made the mistake of declaring in customs a large box of kiirtan CDs and cassettes I was carrying. It caused a big stir because all recordings have to pass through the censor before entering the country (at least a two-week process.) I thought that because they were religious they wouldn't mind, but in fact that was the worse thing to say. Almost all spiritual groups (such as the Hari Krishna and Sai Baba) are banned in Indonesia. Miraculously (and due to good planning and presentation I suppose by margiis) AM is a permitted spiritual organisation. (I wasn't ever able to bring my albums in though!)

Bali, however, is Hindu. They practice a distinct breed of Hinduism that has both strong similarities and sharp differences from India.

MARGII HOTEL: NEW IDEAS IN MANAGEMENT After the retreat we went to a tourist area in South Bali near the beach, so Narada could check out the surf. Here in Kuta we had our most surprising experience!

Kuta is a mix between Miami Beach, the gold coast of Australia and New Market in Calcutta. Its full of hustle, drinking, tourism, and generally tamasik vibes. We arrived on a

Monday night and the margiis directed us to visit Adhi Dharma hotel in the middle of Kuta. We arrived at a pretty 100-room hotel with nice gardens around a swimming pool and lovely Balinese architecture. This hotel is owned by Sudarshana, one of the first Balinese margiis and a major businessman. He has a very unique management style. He has around 100 employees at the hotel, which includes a restaurant and bar. All employees must attend THREE MONTHS SPIRITUAL TRAINING before they do their job training. Sudarshan hires young people from his hometown in Singaraja and personally trains them at his own ashram in all facets of Ananda Marga. On the job they are expected to keep sentient diet, do regular sadhana and follow Yama and Niyama. If they begin to lapse, he sends them back to training!

So we arrived on a Monday night which is the DC night at the hotel. we knew it began at 6:30, but we weren't sure where it was held. After a short wander we heard enthusiastic kiirtan booming out of a room on the third floor. We scurried up the steps to a large hall, and found a room of 80 or so people dancing kiirtan with guitar and tambourine. Kiirtan lasted for an hour, followed by DC and a long inspiring talk by Sudarshana (we could just understand that it was about the varnas and universalism, since he spoke in Balinese or Indonesian.)

After DC everyone enjoyed some Prasad and we had a chance to meet with Sudarshan and his daughter who manages the hotel. Since we couldn't afford a room there he invited

us to stay in the "Acharya's" room behind the DC hall. For our few day stay we enjoyed walking around the hotel and being greeted with a cheerful Namaskar by the staff, eating sentient meals in the staff kitchen, being awakening in the morning by Painca Janya by a few more zealous staff members, then short DCs at 6:30 and 7:30 AM. A peak in the kitchen where meals are prepared for the restaurant, revealed a list of Yama and Niyama and the 15 shiilas displayed on the walls.

As it turns out, and as you would expect, staff members have varying amounts of sincerity for their practices. Perhaps 7 or 8 or them were bonafide margiis (a few ex-LFTs worked there), others perhaps liked the practices and probably others just kept up the front. Still, what harm could that do them? Sudarshan said he had created some LFTs through this work and, I believe, even acharyas!

Sudarshan also arranges RAWA training by having well-attended gamelan classes twice a week for staff. It was all an amazing contrast since most of the guests at the hotel were there to drink, shop and party! On the other hand, during our stay there, margiis from Guam, the US, Singapore and some acharyas turned up for short stays and we became friends with the staff, so the place began to feel like a luxury jagriti!

How is that for a new kind of progressive management?

Kamala

Letter from The Congo

Dear brothers and sisters,

The following is a letter I received from Didi Ananda Bhaktidhara from Congo. She mailed it on Dec. 3 and it just reached today. It will make your laugh and it will make you cry. But, ultimately, you will feel Baba throughout.

Yours in Him,

Dada Arghyananda

Letter
of Didi Ananda
Bhaktidhara

*Brazzaville, Congo December
3, 1997*

Dear Dadaji,

Namaskar. Trusting you are fine. By His Grace only, He is giving us the opportunity to serve Him through the suffering people of Congo. It's really sad to see Brazzaville now! Poto-Poto, Makondo and Plateaux, the places of the Margiis homes, are all cemeteries now. It is a dead city. At present our work is mainly feeding 107 children whose parents were killed during the war or abandoned in the streets. We have no water or electricity. All buildings and hotels were destroyed by fire. Most people are now jobless. Margiis are suffering. Many Margiis who were from the South, the supporters of the defeated President Lissouba, are in hiding especially those who participated in the war. The airports of Brazzaville and Point Noire were completely destroyed by bombs. Even now as you walk along the roads you will find skulls and skeletons. ►

Our old Jagriti in Ouenze has become a cemetery with bodies buried in the market and along the roadside. More than 15,000 people died and many more in the hospitals with amputated legs and arms.

During the time the Angolan Forces entered Brazzaville and the Lissouba army was losing, I also went to Pointe Noire. Missiles and bullets were as thick as rain. When the militia of the new President Sassou won, I returned to Brazzaville to reunite the Margiis and begin the badly needed relief work.

When we restarted Dharma Cakra in our bullet and missile riddled Jagriti, we were 10 children of Baba crying, laughing, hugging and telling our experiences. Manojit, the president of Ananda Marga in Congo and colonel in the army, sent a radio announcement to inform Margiis that it was now safe to return to Dharma Cakra. Every Sunday our numbers are increasing and so many stories are being told. I am sending you a few of those stories.

Thank you in advance for any help the Workers and the Margiis of Europe can do for Baba's Mission in Africa. I feel that, although this war has been painful for all of us, it has a Divine purpose to help us learn to surrender and to be detached to mundane life. I feel, deep in my heart, that Baba is always with us eternally. He has a special plan for Africa.

Thank you for all your support and inspiration.

Only His Grace,

Didi Ananda Bhaktidhara

Ashok's story

ASHOK WAS FROM THE South but living in Brazzaville. While the southern army of

president Lissouba were feverishly searching for "spies" amongst the Northern civilians in Brazzaville, Ashok helped a neighbor woman escape to safety in the North. Before he could return he was captured by the northern militia of Sassou. He was held five days in a small wooden room with many other captives.

With no water, no food and no toilet, the only thing Ashok could do was to think about Baba. Every day persons were taken out of that room and shot.

Ashok remembered the Supreme Command and felt that soon his time would come. On the fifth day he was taken out, asked some questions and lined up before a firing squad. The militia wanted his clothes so they could sell them. They told him to undress. When they saw he was wearing a lungota, they became afraid. They said, "Are you a mystic?". Ashok told them he was practicing Yoga. They argued amongst themselves. Just then a jeep pulled up and inside was a classmate of Ashok. He argued with the other militia. He showed them the loot he had in his jeep. While they were busy dividing up the loot, Ashok's classmate told him to run. When Ashok reached Didi's house in Brazzaville, he was holding his lungota in his hand and shouting, "Look, Didi, Baba saved my life with this!"

Dada

Rasaganananda's story

THE RS DADA WAS STAYING in the Jagriti in Brazzaville when the Sassou militia attacked the city. Dada had kept his shaoca manjusa, a plastic bottle of water, inside his left upper pocket of his inner shirt. He sat doing meditation in the DC hall while bullets were flying

everywhere. One missile blew out one wall of the Jagriti. Dada stayed in front of the photo of Baba. Just then a bullet ricochet off the wall and struck Dada at the heart. It knocked him over. When he realized what had happened he looked to find his shaoca manjusa was destroyed by the bullet, but he was unharmed.

Brother Kumod's story

WHEN I FIRST CAME TO Congo, I went to Gamboma, a small town about one day's journey from Brazzaville. Brother Kumod, whom Dada had initiated sometime before, was unit secretary. Whenever I came, I stayed in one nice room in his house which he kept only for the Didi's. Later when the school was opened, Didi Amala shifted to the school and the room in Kumod's house became the DharmaCakra hall for all Margiis.

Just three days before the war broke out, Kumod, a colonel in the army of Lissouba, was in Brazzaville on official army work. He could not understand why every time he tried to leave for Gamboma some situation would compel him to stay. On the day he was to return to Gamboma a message came that his mother was seriously ill, so he could not leave. On that day the war broke out. All the colonels in Gamboma were the first target of the Sassou militia. Even their homes were burned to the ground. Kumod's wife and five children were home alone when the attackers came. By Baba's Grace the entire family had been initiated. When, Manasii, Kumod's wife heard the shooting, she gathered all the children and took shelter in the room where we hold DC. Baba's photo and pratik were displayed. ►

The militia knew the house of Kumod and when they arrived they peppered it with machine gun fire. Then one of the militia threw two hand grenades inside. The entire house was ablaze. They continued firing into the house. Noone could have survived. By a Divine Grace, not even one bullet entered the DC hall. Manasii said she felt a Divine shield protecting them inside the room. While the house was burning, Manasii gathered the children and crawled to the kitchen and left the house unscathed. The neighbors hid them. While they were safe inside the neighbors, their house collapsed into ashes. They lost everything they owned. But still, they felt it was a miracle of Baba.

Didi Amala was told to leave the school and get out of Gamboma. She told Manissa to follow her with the children. The entire population of Gamboma was astonished how Kumod and his family were saved. They said, "The 'Baba Nam Kevalam' church is really very powerful to protect its members".

Brother Ketoviirya's story

KETОВИИРЯ WAS A MARGII for more than 15 years although not very active, nor very strict in his spiritual practices. But, as most Margiis in Congo, he had so much love and devotion for Baba. As many, he carried Baba's photo wherever he went. Brother Ketoviirya was from the North and when the war broke out, he helped 40 people renting in his compound to escape towards the southern part.

Ketoviirya is noted for his sacrificing and service-minded personality. After completing

his assistance to the families of the South, he was caught by the Lissouba army. There was an order to kill him. He was brought to the river bank. He was undressed. Both hands were tied behind his back. He closed his eyes and just repeated Baba's name as he surrendered himself to the Divine Will. He heard the sound of the guns cocking for fire. One soldier with an orange cap asked him, "Are you praying?" Ketoviirya answered, "I don't know if I am praying, but I just call my God in my heart." The man with the orange hat continued to ask questions. Ketoviirya began to feel hope as he looked at the orange cap. He thought to himself, "Baba, have you sent this orange cap? This is Ananda Marga's color. It is a good sign."

Suddenly a car drove up unexpectedly with other militia men. One of them asked "who ordered this man to be killed. He is not a politician. Release him!" Other militia men said that Colonel Nguimbo ordered to kill him. The man shouted, "No, we don't respect Nguimbo." Then an argument flared between two groups of militia. Finally, they decided to release him.

The man from the car addressed Ketoviirya, "Elder brother, do you remember me? Once I came to your office and I told you about my wife who was just giving birth and explained that I had no money. Even though I had never met you before and you did not know my real situation, you gave me 30,000 CFA (a month's salary in Congo). Your kindness had solved my problem. This time God has given me the opportunity to help you also. Thank you and now, you should run! I will take care of these

other people."

As Ketoviirya ran, he could hear heavy discussion amongst the troops and gun fire. He arrived to the Didi's house and narrated the story. I advised him to go back to the North via Kinshasha, which had just been liberated by Kabila's forces. When he reached the port to take the boat across the river to Kinshasha he was apprehended by Kabila's army. As he opened his folder to show his documents, one militia man saw the Pratik, Baba's photo and a book in French called, "Ananda Marga: a New Way of Life". The militia man embraced him. It was Paresh, a Margii from Zaire. Paresh told him, "You are my brother in Baba". Then he was helped to escape via Kinshasha.

After the war I met Ketoviirya on the road. We were so excited to see each other, we almost cried from joy. He told me that wherever he went he kept his folder ready. He showed me what was inside. "Didi, look, my 'fetish', the One who saved me." I saw Baba's photo and Pratik inside. Ketoviirya has since helped me so much in the relief in Brazzaville and he promised to work more for Ananda Marga. During this war, all the Margiis showed the true Universal Brotherhood, beyond tribal and political sentiments.

*Nataraj is published by AMPS
19 Lovel St Katoomba NSW
2780. Tel: 047 823 911
FAX: 047 826 652
e-mail: ananda@pnc.com.au*

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